

TESTIMONY FOR HEARING IN HARTFORD

GOOD EVENING FELLOW CITIZENS,

MY NAME IS XIOMARA GOUBOURN AND I AM HERE TO TESTIFY IN SUPPORT OF

CONTINUED FUNDING FOR FAMILY HOUSING PROGRAMS IN THE STATE OF CT,

AND SPECIFICALLY FOR DCF'S AND DSS'S SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR FAMILIES

PROGRAMS. FOR SEVEN YEARS, I HAVE BEEN A CASE MANAGER FOR DOZENS OF

FAMILIES. DURING THESE YEARS, I HAVE SEEN FIRST HAND THE IMMENSE

DIFFERENCE THIS PROGRAM HAS MADE TO HUNDREDS OF FAMILIES LIVING

UNDER THE RAVAGES OF HOMELESSNESS AND HOPELESSNESS. MOST OF THE

FAMILIES WE SERVE ARE SEPARATED FROM ONE ANOTHER BECAUSE OF

DIFFICULTIES OFTEN CONCERNING THEIR INABILITY TO FINANCIALLY OR

EMOTIONALLY SUPPORT THEIR HOUSEHOLDS. IN ALL CASES, THE CHILDREN

WHO ARE REMOVED FROM THOSE IMPOVERISHED FAMILIES ARE THE ONES WHO

SUFFER THE MOST. POVERTY IS ONE OF THE MOST VIOLENT ACTS INFLICTED ON

THOSE CHILDREN, AND THIS IS TOO OFTEN COMPOUNDED BY SEPARATION

FROM THE ONLY PERSONS THEY KNOW AND LOVE - TCI'S SHF, FUNDED BY THE

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL

SERVICES, PROVIDES RENT SUBSIDY AND SERVICES THAT PROMOTE THE

REUNIFICATION AND PRESERVATION OF SUCH FAMILIES. EACH FAMILY IS

ASSIGNED A CASE MANAGER WHO HOLISTICALLY ASSESSES THEIR NEEDS,

COMPILES A SERVICE PLAN TO ADDRESS THOSE NEEDS AND ASSISTS THEM IN

IDENTIFYING AND OBTAINING SUITABLE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN NON-

IMPACTED NEIGHBORHOODS. HOUSING THEN SIGNIFIES THE BEGINNING OF A



HEALING PROCESS BROUGHT ABOUT THROUGH COLLABORATION WITH OTHER

SERVICE PROVIDERS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY. SHF IS CURRENTLY SERVING

OVER 500 FAMILIES, MORE THAN 1200 FAMILIES HAVE BEEN HOUSED AND, AT

LAST SURVEY, OVER THREE THOUSAND CHILDREN HAD BEEN

HOUSED/REUNIFIED WITH THEIR PARENTS. NINETY-THREE PERCENT OF THE

FAMILIES SERVED MAINTAIN HOUSING AND THERE IS A 100 PER CENT

UTILIZATION OF THE VOUCHERS THEY RECEIVE. THERE ARE CURRENTLY 778

FAMILIES ON THE WAITING LIST AND REFERRALS CONTINUE TO COME IN AT THE

RATE OF ONE HUNDRED PER MONTH – AS A CASE MANAGER WORKING

DIRECTLY WITH THESE FAMILIES, I GET TO EXPERIENCE FIRST HAND THE

ANXIETY AND STRESS PARENTS ARE UNDER WHEN I FIRST MEET THEM. I HAVE

SEEN DISBELIEF WHEN I EXPLAIN WHAT THE PROGRAM OFFERS (SECURITY

DEPOSIT, MONTHLY SUBSIDY AND A LIFE COACH TO HELP THEM NAVIGATE

COMPLICATED AGENCY SYSTEMS) I HAVE ALSO SEEN TEARS OF JOY WHEN A

FAMILY RECEIVES THE KEYS TO THEIR NEW APARTMENT, SOME OF THEM

STATING THAT UNTIL THAT MOMENT, THEY DID NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD

HAPPEN FOR THEM. THE COST EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROGRAM IS

OUTSTANDING, BUT ALONG WITH THE COST SAVINGS, THE PROGRAM SAVES

FAMILIES WHO INTEGRATE INTO COMMUNITIES BENEFITTING BOTH IN THEIR

SUCCESS.

